

TO THE FRIENDS
OF THE
ESSEX INSTITUTE.

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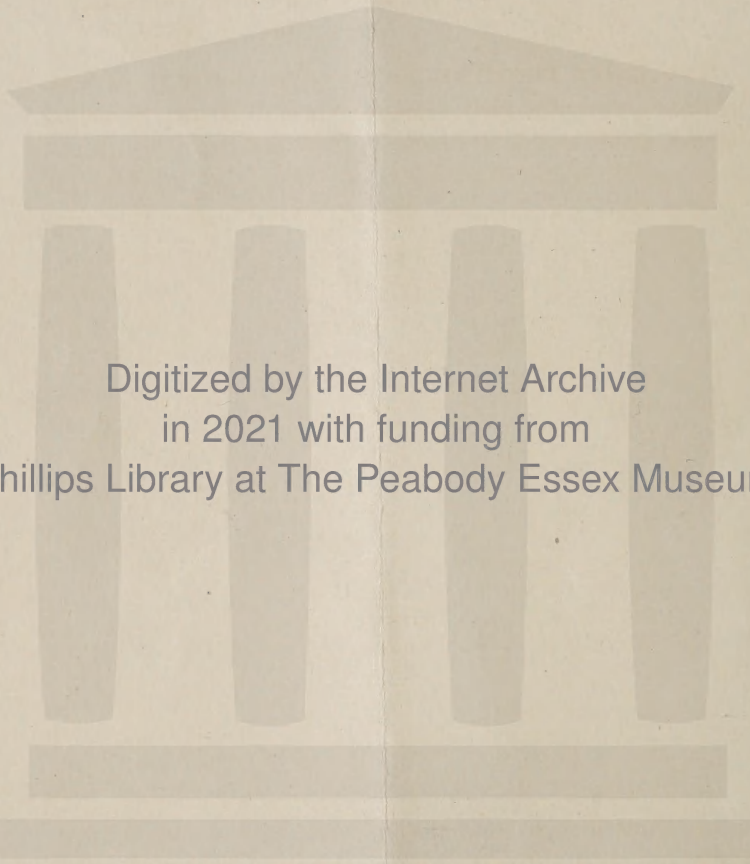
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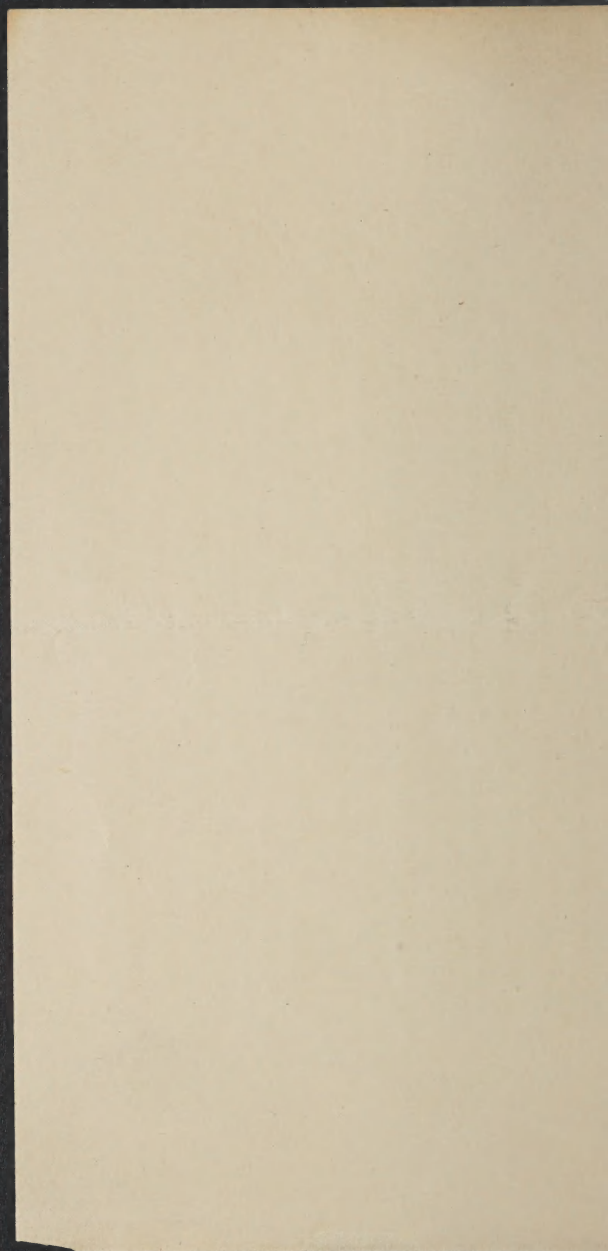


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NOTE.—Since this circular letter was printed, information has been received that the late William B. Howes, a native of Salem, left to the Essex Institute a bequest of \$25,000.00. This unanticipated aid affords great encouragement to all who are interested in accomplishing the important enterprise which is outlined in the circular; and it is hoped that the good-will so generously manifested by Mr. Howes may serve to stimulate a like sentiment on the part of many friends of the Institute. The work to be achieved, while it necessarily demands a large expenditure of money, will prove of permanent and inestimable value. It can certainly be accomplished, if the people of Salem, at home and abroad, who have been blessed with pecuniary success in life, will kindly extend a helping hand.

Communications relating to the proposed undertaking may be sent to Dr. Henry Wheatland, or to any member of the Committee.

Salem, May 6, 1879.



*Rooms of the Essex Institute,
Salem, May 1, 1879.*

THE ESSEX INSTITUTE, formed some thirty years ago by the union of the Historical and Natural History Society, has followed the line of research of both of its progenitors.

Some of its plans for promoting a general interest in the objects for which it exists have received special commendation at home and abroad. Its field meetings, held in various parts of the county, and sometimes outside of the limits of the State, have been of great advantage to many communities, and have quickened a zeal for scientific and historical studies. The familiar lectures and valuable papers which it yearly gives to the public constitute a generous contribution to the thought of the times. Looked at from every point of view, the Institute deserves well both of scholars and of the community at large.

FUNDS, RECEIPTS, EXPENSES.—Its funds consist of about \$10,000, yielding an annual income of \$600, which according to the will of the donors can be appropriated to the current expenditures. The receipts from the annual assessments are about \$1,050; from the sale of the publications, lectures, concerts, exhibitions, etc., the amount varies from \$800 to \$1,200 annually. This income hardly suffices to, and at times does not, meet the current expenditures (as salaries, rent, heating, lighting, publications,

etc.), no margin being left for the proper binding and arrangement of the books, pamphlets, manuscripts, etc., so as to make the collection available to its fullest extent, for reference. The only debt is one of about \$2,000, due the President, which represents advances made by him, from time to time, to cover deficiencies in the income.

COLLECTIONS.—The large and valuable collection of manuscripts, consisting of original charters, commissions, account books, court papers, almanacs with written notes, etc., besides rare historical tracts, maps, engravings, photographs, etc., are now deposited in various places in the building. The collections are rapidly increasing in size and importance, but with the present limited accommodations, there is not sufficient room or means for their convenient arrangement. This is to be regretted, for there are many valuable documents, both for antiquarian interest and for historical research, especially with regard to the history and biography of this vicinity. Many valuable family portraits have been recently added to the collection, and many more would be deposited in its keeping if the society had better facility for their proper care.

The **CABINETS** contain a large collection of antiquarian and historical relics, medals, coins, paper currency, etc., which are placed in Plummer Hall. The scientific portion was deposited in 1869 with the Trustees of the Peabody Academy of Science. At the time of its removal, the collection contained over 125,000 specimens in the departments of Ethnology, Zoology, Botany, Mineralogy and Geology, scientifically arranged and in good part labelled

and catalogued. It is to be noted that the fund established by Mr. George Peabody, for the promotion of Science and useful knowledge in his native county, was entrusted to the management of a board of nine Trustees. The entire income of the Peabody fund being required for the purposes of the Academy, *the Institute does not receive any benefit from this fund*, except that it has been relieved of the care of a portion of its collection.

Meantime there are other departments of the Institute which have equal claims upon the public, and these have so enlarged their sphere of operations that not only has all the space formerly occupied by the scientific portion been filled, but more means are required at the present time, by the Institute, to meet the demands of the public and to do justice to itself.

The PUBLICATIONS of the Institute are:—

1st, the "*Bulletin*," which is published quarterly and contains abstracts of papers read at the meetings of the society, accounts of the Field Meetings, and occasional communications of scientific interest. It is also used as a medium of acknowledgment of donations to the Library and Museum.

2nd, the "*Historical Collections*," which contains records of courts, parishes, churches and towns in this county; abstracts of wills, deeds and journals; records or minutes of births, marriages, deaths, baptisms; inscriptions on tombstones; genealogical, historical and biographical papers, etc. This work is found to be indispensable to all students of our local history. These publications are used as a medium of exchange with county newspapers,

and with historical and scientific societies at home and abroad. By this means over one hundred volumes a year are added to the library.

The LIBRARY now numbers more than 30,000 bound volumes, and nearly 120,000 pamphlets, exclusive of duplicates, embracing nearly all departments of literature, and, as at present constituted, is more useful for purposes of reference than for circulation. A few thousand dollars expended in the purchase of works of standard interest, and an annual expenditure of a comparatively moderate amount would put this library in good working order, and make it one of the most valuable collections of books in the county. A fund, the income thereof to be expended for the above purpose, is very desirable. It is known that several thousand volumes would be at once added to the library, if room were made for their arrangement.

It is a matter of regret that this society has no home of its own, being only a tenant in the building belonging to the Salem Athenæum. It is true that it has been reasonably well accommodated in its present quarters, but its large, invaluable and increasing collections of books, manuscripts, relics and portraits require more enlarged accommodations. What the Institute needs, and what some of its friends think it has fairly earned, is a building of its own, commodious, fire proof, and arranged with reference to the purposes of the society and its future growth; containing library room, gallery for historical collections, portraits, etc.; a manuscript room, reading room and a small hall for lectures.



It is hoped that the friends of the Institute, whether inhabitants of our own city or belonging to that numerous class which we are fond of designating as "the Salem people abroad" will help us to accomplish this desired object. All of these, it seems to us, ought to be glad to lend a helping hand in this enterprise. In that building which we have set ourselves to secure, might be gathered and preserved the records and relics of the old families of the county, the portraits that hand down from generation to generation, the memory of good and true men and women, the histories of cities and towns; in fact, all that pertains to the old life and the new, of the county. Past experience justifies us in believing that, with a rallying centre so stable, there would be a constant influx of books, manuscripts, works of art, things new and old; a collection that would please the curious, delight the antiquarian, instruct the student and the historian, and benefit every class in the community.

HENRY WHEATLAND, *Chairman.*

A. C. GOODELL, JR.,	D. B. HAGAR,
WM. SUTTON,	JAMES KIMBALL,
WM. P. UPHAM,	H. L. WILLIAMS,
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GEO. M. WHIPPLE, <i>Sec.</i>	T. F. HUNT,

